

Message Text

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11

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

SAM-01 JUSE-00 /067 W

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P R 170935Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9228

INFO COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA PRIORITY

COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA

CINCPAC HONOLULU

CNA WASHINGTON

SECDEF WASHINGTON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 7257

E.O.: GDS

TAGS: MARR, PINR, JA

SUBJ: ARREST OF SOVIET NEWSMAN

REF TOKYO 7180

SUMMARY. PRESS HAS DEVOTED EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO ARREST OF SOVIET NEWSMAN. AFTER INITIAL SIGNS THAT IT WOULD INDICT NEWSMAN, GOJ NOW SEEMS TO BE MOVING TOWARDS HIS PROMPT EXPULSION FROM JAPAN. END SUMMARY.

1. ALTHOUGH PREOCCUPIED WITH LARGER DOMESTIC ISSUES, PRESS HAS DEVOTED EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO ARREST OF SOVIET NEWSMAN FOR ATTEMPTING TO PURCHASE CLASSIFIED INFORMATION FROM A U.S. NAVY MAN. COVERAGE INCLUDED PRESS CONFERENCE BY SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICIALS WHO SAID CHARGES

WERE TOTALLY UNFOUNDED AND CHARGED THAT NEWSMAN HAD BEEN MISTREATED DURING QUESTIONING. PRESS ALSO REPORTED THAT FONOFF HAD REJECTED SOVIET EMBASSY DEMAND FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE NOTING THAT HE DID NOT ENJOY IMMUNITY AND WAS THUS SUBJECT TO POLICE JURISDICTION.

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POLICE SOURCES REPORTEDLY SAID THAT HE HAD ATTEMPTED

TO DESTROY UNDEVELOPED FILM HE HAD OBTAINED FROM CREW MEMBER.
NOT UNEXPECTEDLY, PRESS HAS ALSO BEGUN TO TRY TO LINK ARREST
WITH CURRENT CIA CONTROVERSY AND WILL NO DOUBT NOW RELATE INCIDENT
TO CHURCH COMMITTEE REPORT HEADLINED TODAY OF COLLUSION BETWEEN
BETWEEN JAPANESE POLICE AND NAVAL INVESTIGATION SERVICE (NIS). ONE
COMMENTATOR IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE
MANICHI NOTED THAT IF CIRCUMSTANCES REVERSED, U.S. SPY COULD NOT

BE ARRESTED SINCE JAPANESE PENAL CODE DID NOT PROTECT SOVIET SECRETS.

2. IT APPEARED AFTER MAY 14 ANNOUNCEMENT OF ARREST THAT JUSTICE
MINISTRY AUTHORITIES AND POLICE WERE INCLINED TO MOVE AHEAD FOR
INDICTMENT. WE UNDERSTAND THAT SCENARIO ENVISAGED WOULD HAVE LED
TO INDICTMENT WITHIN THE 10 DAYS PRESCRIBED BY LAW, FOLLOWING
WHICH NEWSMAN WOULD HAVE BEEN RELEASED TO AWAIT TRIAL. PRESUMABLY HE
WOULD HAVE LEFT JAPAN SOMEHOW.

3. ON MAY 17 HOWEVER AMERICAN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR GENERAL YAMAZAKI
REQUESTED INFORMAL MEETING WITH ACTING DCM TO DISCUSS CASE. YAMAZAKI
SAID FONOFF NOW BELIEVED THAT IT WOULD BE BEST TO DROP CHARGES AND
RELEASE THE NEWSMAN. HE EXPLAINED THAT SOVIETS HAVE REACTED VERY
STRONGLY AND THAT FONOFF WAS CONCERNED ABOUT RETALIATION AGAINST
JAPANESE NEWSMEN IN MOSCOW. YAMAZAKI INQUIRED AS TO WHETHER U.S.
WOULD OBJECT TO GOJ DROPPING CHARGES. DCM OFFERED PERSONAL OPINION
THAT U.S. WOULD NOT BE SERIOUSLY TROUBLED BY SUCH A DECISION AND
UNDERTOOK TO CONFIRM THIS WITH AUTHORITIES INVOLVED.

4. AFTER CONSULTING WITH NAVY, DCM SUBSEQUENTLY INFORMED SECURITY
DIVISION CHIEF YAMASHITA THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO COOPERATE
WITH JAPANESE AUTHORITIES, THAT WE BELIEVE THAT JAPAN HAS
RESPONSIBILITY FOR DECISIONS IN THIS MATTER AND THAT WE WILL GO ALONG
WITH GOJ DECISION. YAMASHITA EXPRESSED APPRECIATION AND SAID THAT HE
THOUGHT GOJ WOULD EXPEL NEWSMAN WITHIN DAY OR TWO AFTER ANNOUNCING IN
EFFECT THAT ALTHOUGH HIS ACTIVITIES HAD BEEN IMPROPER AN INDICTMENT
WAS NOT SOUGHT SINCE U.S. SECURITY INTERESTS HAD NOT BEEN DAMAGED.
HODGSON

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